

weekend. It is my prayer that America will take a moment to reflect on the meaning of that day.

Its meaning is not a relic of the past. It doesn't just belong to the "greatest generation." It belongs to all of us. It was America's solemn call to action—not for a generation but for all time—a powerful reminder of our duty to our Nation, to each other, to our children, and to an afflicted mankind.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, are we in morning business now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I could not be a stronger supporter of efforts to prevent human trafficking. But we must offer comprehensive solutions that provide meaningful and reliable resources to support these survivors.

Just this Congress, I have led the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act—widely recognized as this country's most important tool in combatting human trafficking. The law reasserted the United States as a global leader in fighting trafficking by strengthening tools available to prosecutors and providing services for victims, including those victims here at home.

The Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act also passed this Congress. That bill expanded the availability of grants to support victims of human trafficking, as well as sexual assault and domestic violence.

And now I am working to enact the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act; S. 2646. This bill authorizes the critical resources needed to provide shelter and services for the 1.6 million youth in this country who are homeless. Many of these young people are, or are at risk of becoming, victims of human trafficking.

It is time we put our money where our mouth is. We must reauthorize these existing programs that work. These children, whether in Vermont, Minnesota, or Texas, need a place to stay and be safe. And I will not leave these priorities behind for political reasons.

TRIBUTE TO DR. MICHAEL B. MCCALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend of mine and a renowned educator in Kentucky, Dr. Michael B. McCall. Dr. McCall has served as the president of the Kentucky Community and Tech-

nical College System, or KCTCS, since 1998, and he recently announced his retirement from that position. It would be difficult to overstate his success at the helm of Kentucky's statewide community and technical college system or the growth by leaps and bounds that KCTCS has seen under his tenure.

KCTCS was created by the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997, which united all of the Commonwealth's community and technical colleges under one system to serve as a gateway to postsecondary education for all Kentuckians. Dr. McCall was named as the founding president in December 1998. Since then, he has overseen 16 colleges located on more than 70 campuses across the Bluegrass State.

Under Dr. McCall's leadership, KCTCS has become the largest provider of postsecondary education in Kentucky, representing 47.1 percent of all undergraduate college students. KCTCS serves over 92,000 students, and since 1998 the KCTCS Board of Regents has ratified or approved more than 700 programs that result in certificates, diplomas, or associate degrees.

KCTCS is also the State's largest provider of workforce training, serving more than 5,300 businesses and 52,000 employees annually. It is workforce training initiatives such as these that help develop Kentucky's labor force and therefore its economy.

KCTCS has also become Kentucky's largest provider of online learning, offering more than 77 online credentials. Thanks to Dr. McCall's virtual learning initiative known as KCTCS Online, online learners can pursue higher education at any time that is convenient for them.

Other KCTCS accomplishments achieved under Dr. McCall's tenure include the establishment of the North American Racing Academy, which is the first college-affiliated horse racing academy in the United States; the Kentucky Coal Academy; the Kentucky Fire Commission; and the Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services. It is clear that Dr. McCall has kept the interests and demands of Kentucky's students and businesses in mind while developing these programs.

Dr. McCall has been an educator and served in community and technical colleges for more than 40 years. Throughout his career, he has been recognized for his leadership and dedication to education. He was the recipient of Phi Theta Kappa's prestigious State Community College Director Award of Distinction.

Dr. McCall also received the National Council for Continuing Education and Training's National Leadership Award in 2005. In the same year the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development honored him with their International Leadership Award. In 2004 Kentucky Monthly Magazine named him the "Kentuckian of the Year." Dr. McCall also served as board chair of the American Association of

Community Colleges, completing his tenure in 2006.

When KCTCS was first established, it set ambitious goals for improving the level of college attainment for Kentuckians. Thanks to Dr. McCall, KCTCS has met those goals.

Under the leadership of Dr. Michael B. McCall, KCTCS has become a remarkable community and technical college system in the United States, and it will reach even higher in the future. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. McCall and wishing him well upon his retirement. He has certainly proved to be a great educator and a great friend to the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

USDA PILOT PROJECT FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF UNPROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, for several years I have envisioned a way to give schools affordable and sustainable access to locally grown foods—a system that would benefit schools, children, and farmers alike. To make this a reality, I introduced the Pilot Project for the Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables as an amendment to the 2014 farm bill. I was very encouraged that the final bill included this pilot project and optimistic that my home State of Oregon could help lead the way—as it often does—by hosting one of the eight programs. That is why I am so pleased to say today Oregon was chosen to participate in the pilot project. This is a win for communities and school districts across Oregon who can now offer meals made with the locally grown produce we are famous for, everything from apples to zucchini, blueberries to tomatoes and everything in between.

This is a win for the local farmers who will gain new customers to buy their fruits and vegetables, and this is a win for the school children who will grow up knowing what fresh produce really tastes like.

This innovative and exciting project establishes a competitive pilot program with up to eight demonstration projects, each representing a different region of the country. These demonstration projects will help schools source healthy, local fruits and vegetables for the breakfasts, lunches, or snacks served to students. It is more important today than ever to ensure America's children have fresh, healthy eating options when they are increasingly exposed to unhealthy, processed foods. The partnerships that the pilot projects will surely grow will put money in the pockets of local farmers while also ensuring that our school kids are eating healthily. I look forward to seeing these projects grow and contribute to the healthy lives of our Nation's young men and women.

RURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION EXTENSION ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I support efforts to provide permanent enhanced conservation tax incentives for family farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who make charitable contributions of land for conservation purposes. As a cosponsor of the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act, S. 526, I am a strong supporter of these valuable tools for protecting significant natural and historic resources on privately owned lands.

These incentives expired at the end of 2013 and are among the so-called extenders—tax provisions that are routinely extended each time they expire. Making these provisions permanent would benefit wildlife, enhance hunting, fishing and shooting access, and keep working lands functioning and intact.

Specifically, the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act would permanently increase the allowable deduction for charitable contributions of property for conservation purposes. The maximum deduction for individuals would increase from 30 percent to 50 percent of adjusted gross income, AGI. Farmers and ranchers would be allowed a maximum deduction of up to 100 percent of AGI. The bill would also allow any unused deduction to be carried forward for up to 15 years to help donors receive the full benefit of their contribution.

When this incentive was in place, it supported donations of conservation easements in my home State of Maine. In 2012, a landowner donated a conservation easement on a 20-acre property in Machiasport, which is home to centuries-old cultural artifacts, including petroglyphs. In addition to being a spiritual site for Maine's Passamaquoddy tribe, this property allows people to explore the State's precolonial history and provides access for local fishermen to utilize valuable clam flats.

Another success story is from 2013 in Harpswell, where a landowner donated a conservation easement on a 44-acre island property in the heart of Casco Bay. The easement provides public access to a scenic peninsula where visitors can picnic, boat, and kayak. Due to this generous donation, Casco Bay is experiencing increased recreational use while also protecting critical habitats for many species of wildlife including shorebirds, herons, and bald eagles.

Continuing the enhanced conservation tax incentives would assist in the conservation of thousands of additional acres and provide a whole host of community benefits—protecting historical features, securing economic opportunities, enhancing recreational access, and preserving valuable wildlife habitat—in 2014 and beyond.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOICE OF AMERICA'S UKRAINIAN SERVICE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, for 65 years the Voice of America Ukrainian Service has been a vital source of comprehensive and unbiased information for the Ukrainian people.

During the Cold War, VOA's uncensored, truthful reporting of the news was a beacon of freedom for Ukrainians dominated by Soviet rule. Through VOA and broadcasts by other media outlets such as Radio Liberty, information-starved Ukrainians not only learned about life in the United States and the outside world but also about developments within Ukraine itself.

From VOA, Ukrainians discovered government-sponsored human rights violations taking place throughout the Soviet Union. They became aware of the many courageous Ukrainian human rights activists, including members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, who languished in Soviet prisons for daring to call upon the Soviet Government to abide by its Helsinki Final Act commitments. And when disaster struck at Chernobyl, Ukrainians looked to VOA to provide the objective information that the Soviet Government stubbornly refused to share.

Since Ukraine regained its independence in 1991, VOA's Ukrainian Service has been able to reach more Ukrainian citizens than ever before. Its daily news program "Chas-Time" is seen nightly on Ukraine's respected Channel 5, and its reporting is often featured on other major Ukrainian television channels.

VOA's audience has exploded in the year since the Maidan Revolution for Dignity and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and aggression in the south-east.

Thanks to its focus on developments in the United States and U.S.-Ukrainian relations, VOA's Ukrainian Service has been instrumental in bringing home to millions of Ukrainians U.S. policy, as well as the perspectives and activities of the Executive Branch, Congress, and NGOs with respect to Ukraine.

Ukraine confronts profound external and internal challenges in its quest for an independent, democratic, European future. As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I commend the ongoing and accelerating role of VOA's Ukrainian service, especially during this historic time.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY NOMINEES

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, the Tennessee Valley Authority, or TVA, is a multibillion-a-year utility—one of the largest in the Nation. It plays a critical role in our economic development efforts in Tennessee by providing low-cost, reliable power that is essential to attracting, retaining, and growing jobs.

Strong, independent leadership at TVA is a priority for all Tennesseans, and the Senate is scheduled to vote tomorrow morning on two nominees to serve on the TVA board.

TVA board members' sole focus should be ensuring ratepayers throughout the Tennessee Valley have affordable, reliable power, and they must be free to operate the entity without undue influence from outside individuals.

While I respect the two nominees currently being considered, I have grown increasingly concerned by the nomination process and the potential influence—or perception of influence—that an outside investor who has proposed a multibillion-dollar project to TVA has had on this process. I have shared those concerns with the White House and the majority leader through several conversations.

I was particularly disappointed the majority leader announced he was moving forward with votes despite being aware of these issues—making it the first time TVA nominations have been confirmed by a rollcall vote since 1987.

While I still believe the selection of TVA board members and their confirmations deserve a closer look moving forward, today I received copies of letters from Virginia T. Lodge and Ronald A. Walter that address the concerns regarding the potential influence of an outside individual who has business dealings with TVA.

I ask unanimous consent that the full text of both letters be printed in the RECORD.

The nominees' forthright letters and their decision to recuse themselves helps ensure that there is no appearance of a lack of impartiality, and I plan to support both of their nominations.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DECEMBER 8, 2014.

Mr. RALPH E. RODGERS,
*Executive Vice President and General Counsel,
Designated Agency Ethics Official, Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville, Tennessee.*

DEAR MR. RODGERS: This supplements my July 30, 2014, letter to you describing steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest, consistent with 5 C.F.R. §2635.502, in the event I am confirmed to serve on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

While I have neither made nor been asked to make any commitments on any projects involving TVA, during the pendency of my nomination I have had contact and discussions with Franklin Haney, with whom I am acquainted, and persons associated with him. I am aware that Mr. Haney has had business dealings with TVA in the past and has made significant business proposals to TVA that may extend into the future. In order to avoid even the appearance of a lack of impartiality, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter in which Mr. Haney or any person on his behalf is a party or represents a party, or in which Mr. Haney, or his family, would have a direct or indirect financial interest.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA T. LODGE.